

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



Student Learning Objectives: Teacher Overview

The New York State Education Department has just released two important resources for District leaders as they implement a critical component of the new teacher evaluation system: the Student Learning Objective Road Map and the Student Learning Objective Guidance Document. These documents explain how New York State will assess the student learning growth of students in classrooms where there is no State assessment that can be used for a State-provided growth or value-added measure (sometimes called “non-tested subjects”).

For the school-year 2012-13, the first year where Student Learning Objectives will be implemented in most schools, they will apply to a large majority of teachers in every school. For the most part, teachers who do not teach in grades 4-8 ELA and Math will have SLOs, and all principals will lead the implementation of this new process. While the State’s new documents apply only to using SLOs as “comparable growth measures” in the teacher evaluation system, Districts have the option of choosing SLOs as a locally-selected measure of student achievement.

Over the coming months, NYSED will work closely with your District’s leaders to ensure they understand the State-determined SLO process, and that they are able to utilize these documents to make the decisions that have to be made at the District level before principals and teachers can begin to implement. The specific details that will impact you as educators will be provided by your District leaders prior to the 2012-13 school year.

Rigorous and ambitious student learning objectives are more than just a component of the new evaluation system – they are an opportunity for you to create a data-driven culture that can help your students achieve college and career readiness goals. The process of setting student learning objectives combined with the purposeful use of data through both formal (interim) and informal (formative) assessments, leads to higher academic performance by students.

We at NYSED are committed to providing your District leaders with as much support as possible as you embark on this critical work. Over the coming months we will host webinars and trainings for your District leaders to provide them with the resources and guidance necessary to provide you with the details of their approaches. Tools and resources will also be provided on Engageny.org.

For now, educators should familiarize themselves with the basics of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs): how SLOs fit into our new evaluation system; what an SLO is and what elements are included within an SLO; what the benefits of SLOs are for those using them. Details specific to you and your colleagues will soon follow.

BACKGROUND: HOW DO SLOs FIT INTO OUR NEW EVALUATION SYSTEM?

The New York State Board of Regents has committed to the transformation of the preparation, support and evaluation of all teachers and school leaders in New York State and the New York State Legislature has enacted historic legislation (Education Law §3012-c) that fundamentally changes the way teachers and principals are evaluated.

Under the new law, New York State will differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness using four rating categories – Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective. Education Law §3012-c(2)(a) requires annual professional performance reviews (APPR’s) to result in a single composite teacher or principal effectiveness score, which incorporates multiple measures of effectiveness. The results of the evaluations shall be a significant factor in employment decisions, including but not limited to, promotion, retention, tenure determination, termination, and supplemental compensation, as well as teacher and principal professional development (including coaching, induction support, and differentiated professional development).

The law specifies that student achievement will comprise 40 percent of teacher and principal evaluations. The 40 percent of teacher and principal evaluations connected to student achievement is broken down into two components per the following requirements:

- In 2011-2012, classroom teachers in ELA and mathematics in grades 4-8 only and school principals in buildings in which these teachers are employed: 20 percent on student growth on State assessments or comparable measures, and 20 percent on other locally-selected measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms in accordance with standards prescribed by the Commissioner.
- In 2012-2013 and subsequent years before Regents approval of a “value-added” model for any grade and subject for all teachers and principals: 20 percent on student growth on State assessments or comparable measures, and 20 percent on other locally-selected measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms in accordance with standards prescribed by the Commissioner.
- Subsequent years for teachers or principals with any grade/subject in which the Board of Regents have approved a value-added model: 25 percent on student growth on State assessments or comparable measures, and 15 percent other locally-selected measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms in accordance with standards prescribed by the Commissioner.

For teachers where there is no State-provided measure of student growth, comparable measures are the State-determined district-wide growth goal setting process. Student learning objectives (SLOs) are the State-determined process. For core subjects: 6-8 science and social studies, high school ELA, math, science and social studies courses associated in 2010-11 with Regents exams or, in the future, with other State assessments, districts *must* use the State-determined growth goal setting process (student learning objectives) with:

- **State assessment if one exists (or Regent equivalents).**
- **If not, district-determined assessment from list of State-approved 3rd party assessments and Regents equivalents.**

For all other grades/subjects: Districts *must* use the State-determined growth goal setting process (student learning objectives) with any of the following four options/assessments rooted within the goal:

- (1) [List of State-approved 3rd party assessments.](#)
- (2) **District- or BOCES-developed assessments provided the district or BOCES verifies comparability and rigor.**
- (3) **School-wide, group, or team results based on State assessments.**
- (4) **School or teacher-created assessment.**

WHAT IS A STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE?

A student learning objective is an academic goal for a teacher’s students that is set at the start of a course. It represents the most important learning for the year (or, semester, where applicable). It must be specific and measurable, based on available prior student learning data, and aligned to Common Core, State, or national standards, as well as any other school and district priorities. Teachers’ scores are based upon the degree to which their goals were attained.

New York State Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) **must** include the following Basic Elements:

- **Student Population:** which students are being addressed?
 - Each SLO will address all students in the teacher’s course (or across multiple course sections) who take the same final assessment.

- **Learning Content:** what is being taught? CCSS/national/State standards? Will specific standards be focused on in this goal or all standards applicable to the course?
- **Interval of Instructional Time:** what is the instructional period covered (if not a year, rationale for semester/quarter/etc)?
- **Evidence:** what assessment(s) or student work product(s) will be used to measure this goal?
- **Baseline:** what is the starting level of learning for students in the class?
- **Target and HEDI Criteria:** what is the expected outcome (target) by the end of the instructional period?
- **HEDI Criteria:** how will evaluators determine what range of student performance “meets” the goal (effective) versus “well-below,” (ineffective), “below” (developing), and “well-above” (highly effective). These ranges translate into HEDI categories to determine teachers’ final rating for the growth subcomponent of evaluations. Districts must set their expectations for the HEDI ratings and scoring: HEDI criteria can be determined at the time of target-setting or districts can choose to let principal judgment apply.
- **Rationale:** why choose this learning content, evidence and target?

Example of a Student Learning Objective (SLO) that Includes all of the Basic Elements:

Population	Honors Spanish II Class; all 30 students			
Learning Content	New York State Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English (LOTE)			
Interval	SY 2011-12 (1 year)			
Evidence	1. Spanish I summative assessment results from my students in 2010-11. 2. My district uses a district-wide diagnostic assessment, which will be administered at the beginning of the school year. 3. My district uses a district-wide summative assessment, which will be administered at the end of the school year.			
Baseline	1. All students had 2010-11 Spanish I results that demonstrated scores of proficient or higher in all basic vocabulary and grammar. 2. Scores ranged from 6% - 43% on the diagnostic assessment, which my district uses as a baseline for all Spanish II students.			
Target(s) and HEDI Scoring	1. 80% of students will demonstrate mastery of at least 75% of the Spanish II learning standards, as measured by the district's summative assessment in May 2011.			
	Highly Effective (18-20 points) 86-100% or more of students demonstrate mastery of 75% of the Spanish II learning standards.	Effective (12-17 points) 78% -85% of students demonstrate mastery of 75% of the Spanish II learning standards.	Developing (3-11 points) 66% - 77% of students demonstrate mastery of 75% of the Spanish II learning standards.	Ineffective (0-2 points) 65% or less of students demonstrate mastery of 75% of the Spanish II learning standards.
Rationale	Previous work in Spanish I focused on working with basic vocabulary and grammar, and building preliminary oral skills. The diagnostic assessment is heavily focused on more advanced writing and reading skills, which are essential components of the Spanish curriculum. Spanish II requires students build on their learning from Spanish I in order to acquire mastery in these areas and to be prepared for Spanish III. Since all of my students completed Spanish I having achieved basic proficiency levels, I am confident they will achieve 80% mastery or above on at least 75% of the Spanish II materials.			

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE PROCESS AND WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

Setting student learning objectives encourage educators to focus and align instruction with district and school priorities, goals, and academic improvement plans. There is evidence that setting rigorous and ambitious learning goals, combined with the purposeful use of data through both formal (interim) and informal (formative) assessments, leads to higher academic performance by students.

Additionally, when learning objectives are set as a grade/team, the process can help determine, and bring greater focus to, particular areas of need and allow for targeted, differentiated professional development to support ongoing success for the overall grade/team.

Many educators use a student goal-setting process as an integral part of their practice, and while districts and States across the country have adopted similar goal-setting approaches, New York State's Student Learning Objective process is tailored to the specific requirements of our teacher and principal evaluation system. We expect our approach will have significant instructional benefit by encouraging teachers to be systematic and strategic in their instructional decisions, and lead to improved teacher and student performance.